

# 17 The future with “going to”

Future forms in English are formed using **auxiliary verbs**.

One of the most commonly used constructions is

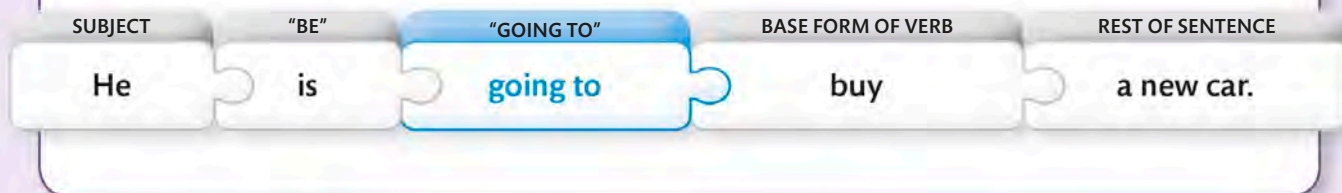
“going to” plus the **base form of the main verb**.

See also:

The future with “will” 18

Future continuous 20 Future in the past 22

## 17.1 HOW TO FORM THE FUTURE WITH “GOING TO”



## 17.2 “GOING TO” FOR FUTURE PLANS

“Going to” is used to talk about **future events** that have **been planned in advance** rather than decided upon at the time of speaking.

I’m **going to** buy a new car.

Base form of verb.



We are **going to** cook dinner tonight.



“Be” matches the subject of the sentence.

“Going to” doesn’t change with the subject.

## FURTHER EXAMPLES

I’m **going to** start reading this book soon.



Sam’s **going to** get fit before his next birthday.



I’m **not going to** eat any chocolate this month.

“Not” is added after the verb “be” to make the negative.



We’re **going to** cycle from Boston to Cape Cod next weekend.



### 17.3 "GOING TO" FOR PREDICTIONS

"Going to" is also used to **make predictions** when there is **evidence** in the present moment.

"Going to" gives the prediction.

Look at those clouds. It's **going to** rain soon.

Evidence in the present moment means that you can make a prediction.



#### FURTHER EXAMPLES

Oh no! She's **going to** slip and fall over.



That hill is too steep. Jon is **going to** crash!



They're **going to** break a window if they're not careful.



Look! The waiter is **going to** drop those plates.



He's wearing a raincoat, so he's **not going to** get wet.



Oh dear, I think she's **going to** fall off that ladder!



### 17.4 QUESTIONS WITH "GOING TO"

Questions with "going to" are formed by swapping the **subject** and "**be**."

**Michelle is going to** be at the meeting.



**Is Michelle going to** be at the meeting?

#### FURTHER EXAMPLES

**Is Rhian going to** come to work tomorrow?



**Is Tim going to** be at the party?



**What are you going to** wear to the party?



**When is he going to** get here?



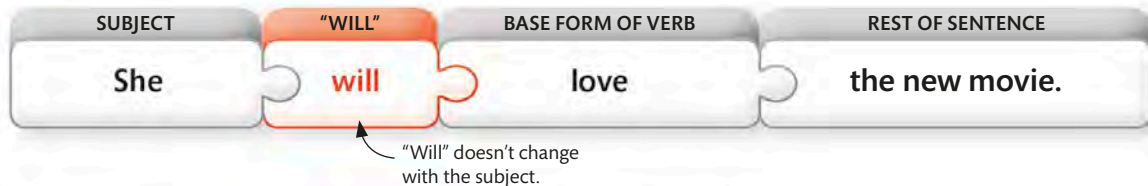
# 18 The future with “will”

“Will” is used to form **some future tenses** in English. It can be used in **several different ways**, which are all **different** from the future with “going to.”

**See also:**

The future with “going to” **17**  
Infinitive and participles **51**

## 18.1 HOW TO FORM THE FUTURE WITH “WILL”



## 18.2 THE FUTURE USING “WILL”

English uses “will” when talking about the future in **four main ways**:

To make a prediction about what you **think** **will** happen.



Wait a few minutes. I think **it will stop** raining soon.

This prediction is **not** based on evidence.

To **offer** to **do something** for someone.



You look frozen. **I’ll make** you some hot soup.

Contraction

To make a **promise**.



**We’ll be** there by eight. Don’t worry!

This decision was not planned in advance.

To describe a **decision** you’ve **just made**.



I know! **I’ll buy** Aaron a surfboard for his birthday.

### TIP

Remember to use the future with “going to” for predictions based on current evidence, and for decisions made before the time of speaking.



### 18.3 "WILL" FOR PREDICTIONS

"Will" is used to talk about predictions about the future when there is **no firm evidence** for that prediction.



This movie is great. You **will** love it.

There is **no firm evidence** that the person will like the movie.

#### FURTHER EXAMPLES

The mall **will** be so busy this afternoon.



**They'll** enjoy their trip to Venice.



Jane **will** probably like the new house. It's really nice.



**She'll** be really angry when she finds out.



"Probably" means something is likely, but not definite.

### 18.4 "WILL" FOR QUICK DECISIONS

"Will" is used to describe quick decisions that someone has made at the time of speaking. They are often a solution to an unexpected problem.



"Will" shows you have just made the decision.

Oh, it's raining! **I'll** take my umbrella.

#### FURTHER EXAMPLES

"Will not" or "won't" is the negative form of "will."

It's midnight. I **won't** walk home through the park.



This apple is delicious. **I'll** have another one.



"So" is often used to join a situation to a quick decision.

There's no juice, so **I'll** have some water instead.



The car has broken down, so **I'll** have to walk to work.



## 18.5 "WILL" FOR MAKING OFFERS

"Will" is also used to offer to do something for someone.

You seem busy. **I'll** pick the kids up from school today.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

**I'll** go to the post office for you if you want.



You must be starving! **I'll** make you a sandwich.



Sit down and relax, **I'll** make you a cup of tea.



Since you cooked, **I'll** do the dishes.



## 18.6 "WILL" FOR MAKING PROMISES

"Will" can be used when making a promise.

Don't worry, **I'll** be careful.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

**We'll** let you know as soon as your car's ready.



**I'll** feed the cat when I get home.



If you bring the food, **we'll** take care of the drinks.



**I'll** take care of everything while you're away.



Ben said **he'll** call us as soon as he gets home.



Don't worry, **I'll** lock the front door when I leave.



## 18.7 "THINK" WITH "WILL"

"Think" can be used with "will" to show that a prediction is just an opinion, or a decision is not final.

"That" is used after "think,"  
but it can be left out.

This is an uncertain  
prediction.



I **think** that **we'll** have  
enough food for the party.



I'm tired. I **think**  
**I'll** go to bed.

This decision is still  
being considered.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

It's cold outside, but we  
don't **think** **it'll** snow today.



"Think" is made negative, rather than "will."

I **think** **I'll** cook chicken for  
dinner this evening.



If we hurry, I **think** **we'll**  
get to the airport on time.



I **think** **I'll** take the children  
ice-skating tomorrow.



## 18.8 FUTURE WITH "SHALL"

"Shall" is used instead of "will" when asking for a decision, or making offers or suggestions. In these cases, it is only used with "I" or "we." It is rarely used in US English.

**Shall I** pick you up or **shall we** meet at the restaurant?

"Shall" is being used  
to make an offer.

"Shall" is being used  
to make a suggestion.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

**Shall I** cook chicken  
or beef tonight?



I'm bored, **shall we** go  
out for a walk?



It's so hot in here. **Shall I**  
open a window?



**Shall we** try to finish  
the gardening today?





# 19 The present for future events

The present simple and present continuous can be used to talk about future events that are already planned. They are usually used with a future time word or time phrase.

See also:

Present simple **1** Present continuous **4**

Prepositions of time **107**

## 19.1 THE PRESENT SIMPLE FOR FUTURE EVENTS

The present simple can be used to talk about events that are scheduled to take place in the future.



### HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT

The train

PRESENT SIMPLE

arrives

FUTURE TIME PHRASE

at 10pm tonight.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

Don't forget we **have** an early meeting tomorrow morning.



The next flight to New York **departs** at 6 this evening.



The concert **is** next Wednesday. I hope we're ready by then!



The bank **opens** late tomorrow because it's the weekend.



## 19.2 THE PRESENT CONTINUOUS FOR FUTURE EVENTS

The present continuous can be used to talk about pre-arranged future events. Time markers usually show whether the event is in the present or future.



### HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT

Dave

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

is playing golf

FUTURE TIME PHRASE

tomorrow.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES



Jack's playing soccer tomorrow.



I'm seeing a movie later.



Sue is studying this evening.



Lisa is playing golf tomorrow.



I'm having dinner with Mike next weekend.



Jay is meeting some friends tomorrow evening.



Tom and Samantha are getting married tomorrow.



I'm running a race for charity this weekend.



# 20 The future continuous

The future continuous can be formed using “will” or “going to.” It describes an event or situation that will be in progress at some point in the future.

See also:

Present continuous 4 “Will” 18

Infinitives and participles 51

## 20.1 THE FUTURE CONTINUOUS WITH WILL

The future continuous describes an event that will be in progress at a given time in the future which is often stated. The event will start before the stated time and may continue after it.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

Right now **I'm working** in a café.

In 10 years' time, I hope I **will be running** a bistro.

FUTURE CONTINUOUS



### HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT

“WILL BE”

PRESENT PARTICIPLE

OBJECT

I

will be

running

a bistro.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

This time next week, we **will be walking** in the Andes.



Emma **will be starting** school in September.



## 20.2 THE FUTURE CONTINUOUS WITH "ANYWAY"

The future continuous can also be used to talk about events that are going to happen as a matter of course or "anyway."

Oh no, I've run out of milk.



I can get some for you later.

No, please don't worry!



It's okay, I'll be **driving** past the store anyway.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES



You can send the parcel here. I'll be **waiting** in the house anyway.



I can give that to Freda for you. I'll be **seeing** her for lunch.

"Anyway" is implied here. →

## 20.3 NEUTRAL QUESTIONS

The future continuous is also used to ask neutral questions: questions asked for information, not to make a request.

### NEUTRAL QUESTION

Future continuous.

Will you be **coming** into work tomorrow?

Yes, I will.

OK, let's talk about the report then.



### REQUEST

Future simple.

Will you **come** into work tomorrow please?

Sure, no problem



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

Will you be **driving** past the post office later?



Will you be **attending** the meeting this afternoon?



## 20.4 THE FUTURE CONTINUOUS TO TALK ABOUT THE PRESENT

You can also use the future continuous to speculate about what is happening at the present moment.

Have you noticed that Andrew isn't at work today?

He'll be working on his presentation at home.

It's more likely that he'll be watching the golf on TV!



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

Why isn't Xavier here today?

He'll be finishing off his report for the annual meeting.



Why is Nev late?

He'll be taking his children to school.



Where is Sarah?

She'll be studying in the library probably.



Is Phoebe at home?

No, she's not here. She'll be playing with Ciara at the park, probably.



Have you seen Roberta?

No, but she's going out later, so I think she'll be getting ready.





## 20.5 THE FUTURE CONTINUOUS WITH "GOING TO"

The future continuous can sometimes be formed with "going to" instead of "will," but this is less common. It can be used in most future continuous constructions except to speculate about the present.

**I can't come out this evening.**  
**I'm going to be studying all night.**



### HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT

"BE"

"GOING TO BE"

PRESENT PARTICIPLE

REST OF SENTENCE

**I** **am** **going to be** **studying** **all night.**

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

I want to go away on Saturday, but **I'm going to be working** all weekend.



I'd love to go out on Thursday, but **I'm going to be finishing** this essay.



Shall we have lunch next week? **I'm going to be visiting** your city.



**I'm going to be staying** with my husband's family for the holidays this year.



Do you want to go to a concert tonight? My wife **is going to be performing**.



At the lecture this evening, two politicians **are going to be talking** about crime.



# 21 The future perfect

The future perfect is used to talk about an event that will overlap with, or finish before, another event in the future. It can be used in simple or continuous forms.

See also:

Infinitives and participles 51

Prepositions of time 107

## 21.1 THE FUTURE PERFECT

The future perfect is used to describe an action or event that will be finished before a certain future time.

"By" has a similar meaning to "before."

They **will have built** the skyscraper **by** January.



NOW



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER



JANUARY

## HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT

"WILL HAVE"

PAST PARTICIPLE

OBJECT

TIME PHRASE

They

will have

built

the skyscraper

by January.

## FURTHER EXAMPLES

Cai **will have read** all his course books by next week.



Sam **will have finished** the laundry by this afternoon.



The next time you see me, I **will have had** a haircut.



We're so late! The play **will have started** by the time we get there!



## 21.2 THE FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS

The future perfect continuous can be used to predict the length of an activity. This tense looks back from the imagined finishing time in the future.

By July, I **will have been working** here for a year.



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

TIME PHRASE	SUBJECT	"WILL HAVE BEEN"	PRESENT PARTICIPLE	REST OF SENTENCE
By July,	I	will have been	working	here for a year.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

By the time this is all ready, Andy **will have been cooking** all day!



By the time I arrive home, I **will have been driving** for six hours.



By this time next month, I **will have been studying** English for a year!



He **will have been waiting** for two hours by the time she arrives.



This case **will have been going on** for over a year before it is settled.





# 22 The future in the past

There are a number of constructions in English that can be used to describe thoughts about the future that someone had at some point in the past.

See also:

Past continuous 10

Infinitives and participles 51

## 22.1 THE FUTURE IN THE PAST USING "WAS GOING TO"

The future in the past is used to look back on an earlier prediction. Where "going to" is used to talk about the future from the present, "was / were going to" is used to talk about a past view of it.



This traffic is awful! I think  
**I'm going to** be late for work.

I thought **I was going to** be late, but I'm right on time.

### HOW TO FORM

SUBJECT

"WAS / WERE"

"GOING TO"

BASE FORM

REST OF SENTENCE

**I** **was** **going to** **be** **late.**

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

I **was going to** start a new book today, but I didn't have time.



Delia **was going to** buy a new dress, but she couldn't find one.



Mike **was going to** have a party, but nobody could come.



We **were going to** buy a new dog, but we decided to wait.



They **were going to** go home, but they went dancing instead.



Sorry, I interrupted. **Were you going to** say something?



## 22.2 THE FUTURE IN THE PAST USING "WOULD"

Where "will" is used to talk about a future event from the present, "would" is used to talk about a past view of it.



I think I **will** finish the gardening today. It shouldn't take too long.

I thought I **would** finish today, but there is still a lot left to do.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

I always knew she **would** be successful.



I was told that my car **would** be fixed by now.



Did you ever think you **would** become a doctor?



I don't know where Hilda is. I thought **she'd** be here by 8pm.



## 22.3 THE FUTURE IN THE PAST USING THE PAST CONTINUOUS

The past continuous is used to talk about an arranged future event from a time in the past.



MONDAY MORNING



MONDAY AFTERNOON



NOW

Jenny **was** extremely **nervous** on Monday morning.  
She **was taking** her driving test that afternoon.

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

They **were planning** to go to the beach tomorrow, but the weather's terrible.



Michelle had been cleaning all day. Her sister **was arriving** that evening.



Hugo had to go to bed early because he **was flying** early the following morning.



# 23 Future overview

## 23.1 THE FUTURE

The **present simple** can be used to talk about events that are timetabled or scheduled to take place in the future.

The train **arrives** at 10pm.

The **present continuous** can be used to talk about future arrangements and plans.

I'm **traveling** to Paris by train later this evening.



The **simple future** is the most common form used to refer to an event in the future.

It { **will**  
**is going to** } rain tomorrow.

The **future continuous** describes an event that will be in progress at a given time in the future. The event will start before the stated time and may continue after it.

It { **will**  
**is going to** } **be** raining all weekend.



## 23.2 "GOING TO" AND "WILL"

English uses both "going to" and "will" to talk about the future. They can sometimes have a very similar meaning, but there are certain situations where they mean different things.

"**Will**" is used to make predictions that aren't based on present evidence.

This is a prediction without firm evidence.

I think Number 2 **will** win.



"**Going to**" is used when there is evidence in the present moment to support a prediction.

Look, Number 2 is **going to** win.





English uses different constructions to talk about the future. These are mostly formed with the auxiliary verb "will" or a form of "be" with "going to."

**See also:**

The future with "going to" 17

The future with "will" 18

The **future perfect** is used to predict when an action or event will be finished. This tense looks back from an imagined time in the future.

They **will have** built the skyscraper by next year.

The **future perfect continuous** is used to predict the eventual duration of an activity. This tense looks back from the endpoint of the action.

By July, they **will have been working** on it for a year.



The **future in the past** describes thoughts about the future that someone had at some point in the past. There are three ways to form this construction.

The traffic was terrible, so I knew I **was going to** be late.

"Am going to" becomes  
"was going to."

"Will" becomes  
"would."

I thought I **would** finish the gardening by the end of the day.

I was nervous on Sunday night. I **was starting** a new job the next day.

"Am starting" becomes  
"was starting."

"**Will**" is used when a decision is made at the time of speaking.

I know! I'll **buy** Jo a surfboard for her birthday.

This decision was not planned in advance.



"**Going to**" is used when talking about a decision that has already been made.

I'm **going to** buy her a surfboard that I saw last week.

This decision has already been planned.

